

**GLASTONBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2018**

The Glastonbury Town Council with Town Manager, Richard J. Johnson, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers of Town Hall, 2155 Main Street, Glastonbury, Connecticut.

**1. Roll Call**

***Council Members***

Mr. Thomas P. Gullotta, Chairman  
Mrs. Jill Barry, Vice Chairman  
Dr. Stewart Beckett III  
Ms. Deborah A. Carroll *{excused}*  
Mr. Kurt P. Cavanaugh  
Ms. Mary LaChance *{excused}*  
Mr. Lawrence Niland  
Mr. George P. Norman  
Mr. Whit C. Osgood

(a) **Pledge of Allegiance.**

*Led by Chairman Gullotta*

**2. Public Communication and Petitions pertaining to the Call.**

*None*

**3. Special Business as contained in the Call.**

(a) **Budget reviews for Fiscal Year 2018-2019:**

**• Presentation and discussion concerning proposed Board of Education budget.**

Board of Education Chairman Susan Karp said that they presented a 2.2% increase to last year's budget representing only salaries and benefits. She said that the Board had cut \$900K across all line items noting it was a difficult year. She continued saying that they met with the Board of Finance and answered their questions and the Board of Finance recommended an \$800K cut. She noted that they usually hear budgets should come in with an increase at about 2% and they hit that range. She said that the rationale of the Board of Finance was \$600K needed for

healthcare they felt they could find and that they believed the Board of Education would have higher revenues from the expanded LINKS program. She said that the change in the investment assumption costs the Board of Education and where the Town was given help, they were not. She noted their budget was unanimously approved and maximizes student learning at the lowest possible cost.

Dr. Alan Bookman, Superintendent, said that they had to do many cuts to get to the 2.2% increase and there is no where else to look but staff. He emphasized that they are still behind the 8-ball with staff given previous cuts. He reviewed a list of questions from the Council. Regarding the number of FTE's for the last 10 years, he said that in 14-15, they added 7 security guards, in 13-14, they added 3 custodians due to the magnet school and in 12-13, they added 12 kindergarten teachers going to a full-day program. Regarding the billable rate for vo-ag, he said the state dictates that. Regarding capital expenses for Eastbury, he said that last year, they spent \$27K on the boiler and \$50K on the water heater. He continued saying this year, they are spending \$350K on air conditioning and to replace the café floor which is old and breaking and made of asbestos. He said that next year, they plan to put \$150K from tuition into the 1% fund dedicated to Eastbury knowing that the future needs include a boiler and roof.

Mr. Cavanaugh asked how much it cost to air condition Eastbury and Board Chairman Karp replied saying \$230K. Regarding the cost per LINKS student, Dr. Bookman said nothing unless there is a personnel cost which is covered by the sending district. Regarding healthcare, he said they spent \$13,821,123 and have \$30-40K remaining but do have other expenses. Regarding the capital costs for Naubuc and Gideon Welles over the next 5 years, he said it was in the budget determined by the computer program but they do what they can to extend lives and mitigate costs. He noted the boiler, roof, parking, fan coil and air conditioning at Gideon and the boiler at Naubuc.

Regarding consideration of a 5/6 school model, Board Chairman Karp said that they considered it very carefully during school consolidation discussions and decided to keep the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade standalone model as best meeting the educational needs. Regarding savings with the closing of Eastbury, Dr. Bookman explained that they didn't hire into permanent positions and teachers followed the students so they only showed a 3-teacher decrease for next year which is not comparable to how Eastbury was staffed. Regarding enrollment compared to projections, he said that they had more kindergarten enrollments than projected which they attribute to houses selling to young families. Mr. Norman asked about the numbers. Dr. Bookman said that 333 were projected for kindergarten, 350 actually enrolled and as of February 1, they are up to 360.

Regarding LINKS revenues, he explained that accepting students is a slow process including the district and the family initiating the process and being supportive of coming to Glastonbury. Mr.

Cavanaugh questioned the Board of Finance rationale of taking in 15 students @ \$650K. Dr. Bookman said that was a lot considering the program currently has 10 total students now. A discussion ensued about the 1% fund. Dr. Beckett said it sounded like the sewer sinking fund and Dr. Bookman said that there's no limit to the fund, just how much can be put in annually. Mr. Norman asked if the lease was a negative for the move. Dr. Bookman said it was in the budget but they hope to get some money back. Board Chairman Karp added that it is not only LINKS but the weight room and pre-school.

Regarding class sizes and declining enrollment, Dr. Bookman said that the contract class sizes were negotiated 40 years ago and represent very high numbers far above what is desirable. Regarding salaries for social studies teachers, he said it was just luck of where they were in salary steps. Regarding the age of the busses, he said that they have been at 18 years and hope to get to 10-12 years. He added that they can keep the engine running but the frame rots out due to the wear. Regarding low enrollment courses in the high school, he said that they only see that in the upper level language courses to provide students the ability to continue their study. Regarding the healthcare account, it was funded but not at the level desired and the staff payment would be increased the following year. He emphasized that the town told us what amount to put in.

Dr. Doug Foyle, Board of Education Vice Chair, said that the Board of Education has a positive balance in the health insurance fund while the town has a negative balance thus creating the appearance that the Board of Education is loaning the town money. Mr. Johnson explained that the town, on its own, would never choose self-insurance as it is too small, but works if combined with the Board of Education. He said that it is to be expected that there will be tough years. He explained that there would be an accounting entry at year end and noted the \$4M reserve saying that as long as the overall reserve is in the black. Dr. Beckett noted that they are all happy they got state aid but suspect that they need to anticipate that this will not continue. He noted that eliminating fixed costs and operating bigger schools is one way to save money.

Mr. Norman asked about the \$900K in cuts which were reviewed by Dr. Bookman. Mr. Niland asked about the cost benefit analysis for outsourcing the busses. Dr. Bookman said they do it every year noting that it is always more expensive and they also lose control over hiring. Mr. Norman asked about special projects. Dr. Bookman said that it varies year to year but this year, sidewalks and repair of sidewalks, white boards, bulletin boards, water tank at Eastbury, Gideon septic, carpet repairs at GHS, GHS intercom repair and Smith phone system repair. For this year, Dr. Bookman said that they are looking at roof repairs to extend their life. Mr. Niland asked about elevated chlorine levels at Eastbury. Dr. Bookman said that they are paying for bottled water because people are uncomfortable but there's no risk and it isn't a lot of money.

Mr. Osgood said that 2.2% seems reasonable on the surface but he expressed concerned that they were only able to get to that level because of Eastbury closing. Dr. Bookman said that they hope to be back to an expected health insurance expenditure. Mr. Osgood asked if they could get a tour of the field house and Board Chairman Karp responded favorably. Mr. Osgood also asked for detailed information on the use of the High School pool. Chairman Gullotta expressed support of a conservative estimate for LINKS revenues and echoed the sentiment about new economic times with the state aid. He hoped they could do the best they could for the Board of Education.

- **Discussion concerning questions or unfinished business regarding Town operations, Debt & Transfer, Revenues & Transfers, Capital Reserve Fund, Capital Improvement Program and other budget related topics (as applicable).**

Mr. Cavanaugh asked if they could invite the Board of Finance to explain their rationale. Chairman Gullotta agreed saying that he had expected to receive a transmittal but they didn't and lacking their meetings being televised, he felt they were lacking information about their budget decisions. Mr. Osgood questioned if they should consider a contingency in case the state cuts ECS. Chairman Gullotta said that they can discuss in their caucuses and see how it plays out over the next few weeks.

#### **4. Adjournment.**

**Motion By:** Mr. Niland

**Seconded By:** Mr. Cavanaugh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Glastonbury Town Council hereby adjourns their special meeting of March 8, 2018, at 7:24 pm.

**Result:** Motion passes unanimously {7-0-0}.

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Kimberly Meanix Miller*

**Kimberly Meanix Miller**  
**Recording Clerk**

**Thomas Gullotta**  
**Chairman**